



The Totem Pole

Harford County's Election Poll Workers Newsletter

Building a better election process one election judge at a time

Volume 4 Issue 1

Spring, 2010



Election Director Jim Massey

Inside this issue:

On Second Thought...	2
Extra, Extra...	2
More Than a Teacher	3
League of Women Voters	3
The Future is Now	4
Welcome a "Board"	4
Primary Elections	5
MAEO	5
Comic Strip: The Pollcat	5
Out with the old...	6

Contributing Editors:

Shawn Larson

Jim Massey

Dale Livingston

Photography by: Brad Burdette

Director's Letter: "June is Bustin' Out All Over"

Remember Rodgers and Hammerstein's song, "June is bustin' out all over" from the Broadway show, Carousel? That's what's going on at the election office this month.

As we begin plans for the 2010 election season, you can already see political signs and gatherings where our community is thinking about the fall election. During the gubernatorial elections, we elect many of our state and county officials. There are usually a plethora of candidates who conduct grass roots campaigns to inform our voters about their candidacy.

Our focus for our election community will be to get the word out about early voting, electing Harford's school board members for the first time, and conducting an accurate and well planned election. Since the Primary Election will be held on September 14, followed by the General Election on November 2, there is very little downtime between them. For this reason, our election efforts begin early in July so we are ready to roll from September through November.

Election judges are our ambassadors in assisting and directing the voters in casting their ballot. Harford County voters will be able to vote on our Touchscreen voting equipment during early voting before the primary and general elections. Election judges were recruited to assist our voters during early voting.

In addition, Harford County voters will have an opportunity to choose their school board members. This is a unique contest where candidates run as nonpartisan and

any voters, including unaffiliated voters, may participate in the primary election to vote for school board candidates in councilmanic districts. In 2010, school board candidates will be elected in councilmanic districts A (Edgewood, Joppatowne), B (Fallston, Abingdon) and D (North Harford). In 2014, school board members will be elected in all six councilmanic districts.

Specimen ballots will be sent to all voters prior to the primary and general elections to provide a sample ballot as well as notice of early voting and Election Day. Absentee ballots will also be available to those who are unable to cast their vote on Election Day or during early voting.

The State of Maryland and Harford County have embraced early voting and the elected school board to widen the opportunity of participating in the process of electing our officials. Our overall success will be largely determined by our election judges as they assist the voters at our polling places.

I want to thank all our election judges for agreeing to help conduct the 2010 election. Your dedication and good work will enhance our efforts in giving Harford County a strong voice in our election.

With best of wishes for a wonderful summer of sunny days, picnics, and vacation in our land of pleasant living.

Jim Massey

Election Director

On Second thought...

As it turns out, the state of Maryland will not be using paper ballots in 2010 after all.

After much debate, the decision was made by Governor Martin O'Malley to take the optical scans out of the FY2011 budget. Joyce Bryce, chief legislative officer for the governor, says the problem was "purely fiscal." The governor had attempted to do whatever it took to try to make optical scans happen; however, the money simply just wasn't there.

In 2004, Maryland instituted the touch-screen voting system. This system provided individual booths where voters can vote and cast their ballots electronically. The benefits of this system is that it eliminates any possibility of over-voting, the voter's selections are clear and precise and it facilitates a high

level of accessibility for disabled voters.

However, in 2007-2008, the House of Representatives and Senate voted unanimously while Governor O'Malley approved to bring optical scan voting to Maryland for the 2010 elections costing around \$20 million.

Ross Goldstein, deputy administrator for the State Board of Elections, estimated that implementing optical scan units would have cost Maryland \$6 million more dollars than the touch screens in FY 2011 because of everything that adding this system would entail. This includes the price of adding voting booths, paper ballots and other accessories.

The decision to keep the touch-screen voting units comes as good news for the Local Board

of Elections (LBEs) throughout the state. Most election officials throughout the state were already comfortable with the TS units and now only have to focus on Early Voting.

As far as what happens beyond 2010 is yet to be determined. If the economy improves, we may see a change in the voting system; if not, the touch-screens will be our system once again. Any accurate prognostication at this point seems extremely doubtful.

Stay tuned.

****THIS JUST IN!****

As of June 4th, the Independent Party no longer met the legal requirements as a Party in Maryland. Letters will be going out soon to all registered Independents with an explanation.

Extra, Extra, Read All About It!!!

EARLY VOTING IS HERE AND IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER!!!

Tell all your friends and relatives. Make sure they tell their friends and relatives.

While we may not be having a hybrid system this year, early voting is very much in the plans.

Since our last issue, we now know when and where Harford County's Early Voting will occur. For the Primary Election Harford County voters can vote from September 3 to September 9 (Closed Sunday September 5) at the Bel Air Library with the Bel Air Town Hall serving as an

emergency backup. For the General Election Early Voting will also occur at the Bel Air Library, from October 22 through October 28 (Closed Sunday October 23). Early Voting hours will be from 10am to 8pm during those days. This means Early Voting will be available on Labor Day.

Harford was the only County in the state that came close to having three Early Voting sites instead of one. Harford fell just short of 150,000 voters, which had they obtained, would've given them two additional Early Voting sites.

As it stands for 2010, the Bel



Air Library is our one and only Early voting site.

If you have any questions please call our office at 410-638-3565; or you may visit our website at:

www.harfordcountymd.gov/elections and click on our Early Voting link.

More Than a Teacher

We here in the election office are always looking for outside assistance when it comes to finding and hiring election judges or getting people registered to vote. Very rarely do we find an individual who does both of those and more. James Whitehurst, a Social Studies teacher at Fallston High School, has gone above and beyond the call of duty when it comes to facilitating the election process.

As of today, Mr. Whitehurst is the only teacher in Harford County who has continually gotten his students involved in being election judges while also registering them to vote. His dedication has paid enormous dividends. For each election cycle Harford County hires students from Fallston High School to work as Technical Judges who do an excellent job. For two years straight now, our election office has conducted Fallston's

Student Government Elections with enormous success allowing students to vote on touch-screen units.

Mr. Whitehurst has become a familiar face in our office with his yearly visits to gather all the materials needed to offer his students the opportunity to register to vote and participate in the election process.

Because of his continued assistance, Mr. Whitehurst was honored as the first recipient of the "Hero of Democracy Award" by the Harford County Board of Elections for his significant contributions to voter registration and the election process.

For all of his hard work and dedication, our election office offers our thanks. Mr. Whitehurst your work has not gone unnoticed and we appreciate it tremendously.

Keep up the great work!



James Whitehurst, pictured holding his Hero of Democracy Award, has made significant contributions to voter registration and the election process.

League of Extraordinary Women Voters

It's not just the staff in the election office who trek out amongst Harford County to get people registered to vote. We also get outside assistance. More specifically, it's the League of Women Voters doing an excellent job in registering people to vote.

This organization has helped with voter registration during lunches and at graduation practices for: C. Milton Wright High, North Harford High, Havre de Grace High and Aberdeen High School.

On May 17, one of our employees, Brad Burdette, was invited by the League of

Women Voters to a dinner at Liberatore's to hear a presentation by Meg Heubeck from the University of Virginia. Heubeck is a member of the Youth Leadership Initiative (YLI) designed to get young people involved in politics, government and voting. The YLI was also interested in discussing our involvement in High School Elections and Voter Registrations.

It doesn't end there for the League of Women Voters. They assist our election office even further by conducting site surveys on Election Day, which is required by the

State each Election year. These duties include making sure judges are performing their jobs efficiently, surveying the lines at polling places and making sure the handicap areas are accessible.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that began in 1920. Over time, the League's legislative priorities have changed to reflect the needs of society and critical issues of concern. The organization remains true to its basic purpose: to make democracy work for all citizens. The League of Women Voters

makes a difference in the lives of citizens because of the energy and passion of thousands of members committed to their principles.

In the near future, the League will assist our office during the following events: The Farm Fair, The Dartington Apple Festival, Bel Air Bash and the Seafood Festival.

We appreciate and thank the League of Women Voters of Harford County. You help makes our job easier.

The Future is Now

We at the Harford County Board of Elections are expanding our horizons by continuing to offer our electoral services to schools throughout the County.

This year our office has helped facilitate elections at Fallston High, C. Milton Wright High, John Carroll High and Edgewood Middle School. The Student Government Association for the aforementioned schools held positions of President, Vice President and Delegate for students to vote for the next coming school year.

The 8th grade class for Edgewood Middle even had a little fun, since they'll be going to high school next year and had no position to vote for, they instead chose topics such as "Best Dressed Teacher" and "Teacher Quickest to Catch Students with Gum."

School spirit was front and center where students were allowed to vote on the same touchscreen units used for Presidential and Gubernatorial Elections. It has been the



Pictured left, the students of C. Milton Wright High School enjoyed working as judges for their SGA elections.



Above, students being checked in at C. Milton Wright



Above, Edgewood Middle students voting.

objective of our office to get young people familiar and comfortable with the voting process. Not to mention at the same time encouraging students to register if they are old enough.

From the young to the really young, students came, saw and voted with much enthusiasm.

Just like the real thing, right?



Faculty at Edgewood Middle did their part working as judges

Welcome a "Board"

The Harford County Election office would like to welcome its newest member Maria Terry to the Election Board. Adding Maria fills in the vacancy that was left for the Democratic substitute member.

When she's not in the election office voting on important decisions regarding elections, Terry, from Havre de Grace, works as a Real Estate Broker in her home town.

Her position as a substitute Board Member became official on March 29, 2010 by a letter from Governor Martin O'Malley.

We are proud to have Maria Terry here in our election office and as a member of our Board of Directors. We have no doubt that she will be an excellent addition to our already excellent Board.

Congratulations Maria!



Maria Terry is Harford County's newest Election Board Member.

Primary Elections: Not a Dem or a Rep, eh? Come on in...

Early Voting isn't the only thing that's new in Harford.

Due to changes made by the Court of Appeals in February, 2010 voters who are unaffiliated or affiliated with another party other than Democrat or Republican can now vote for the school board contests in the Primary Elections.

In the past, Primary Elections

were only for Democrats and Republicans to vote for their respective party candidates, for whom they wanted representing them in the General Election.

This year all other political parties are eligible to vote for school board contests which will also be on the ballots.

The Maryland State Legislature

voted to add the school board on the ballots for this upcoming Primary Election. This law was made to give citizens more input into the decision making process as to who will be running Harford's school board.

Hopefully this new law is the first step in the improvement of education for the children throughout Harford County.

Another MAEO Conference in the Books

Once again, the Maryland Association of Election Officials (MAEO) met for their annual conference to discuss a variety of issues regarding elections.

This year's conference was held at the Sheraton Baltimore North in Towson, Maryland located near Goucher College.

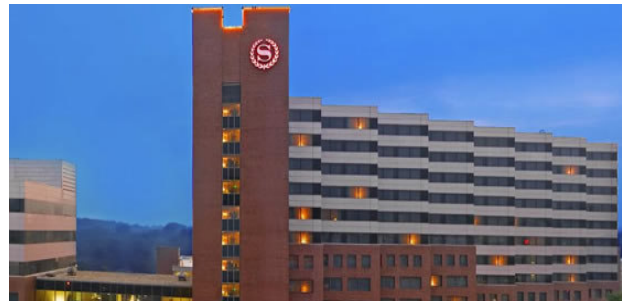
However, this year's conference was different than others from years past. Because of economic restraints, the meeting was conducted in a one day rather than it's usual three day event. The MAEO delegation was also joined by the State Board of Elections' (SBE) and

so two events were combined into one, with MAEO's Annual Meeting and SBE's Biennial Conference, which is usually held in a non-election year.

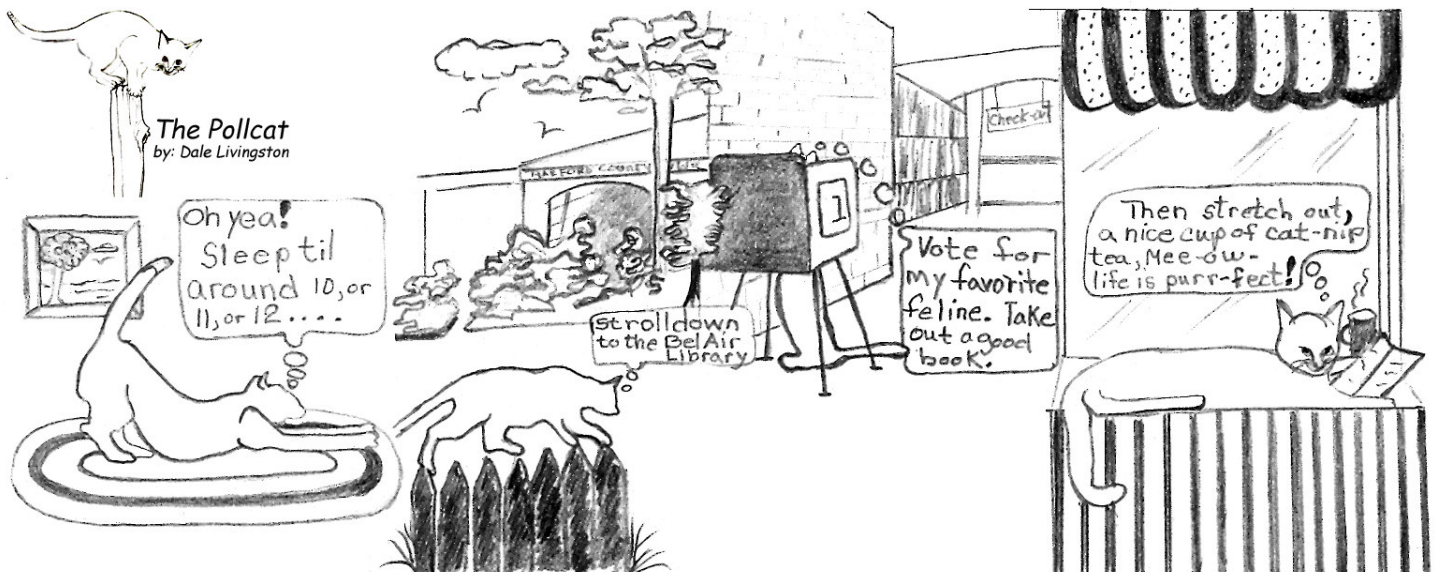
Among the topics discussed were Early Voting and all the preparations that change will entail. We also discussed Voter Outreach, Voter Registration, and Candidacy and Campaign Finance.

The afternoon concluded with a "Best Practices" session. This is where staff from different Local Boards of Election (LBEs) share ideas about their processes and procedures

which they have found to be effective in their jobs. It is a good practice to share what we do and learn from others. In doing so, we become more successful and better election officials for our State and it's citizens.



The Sheraton Baltimore North in Towson, site of this year's MAEO Conference.



Out With the Old...



In With the New...

District/Precinct 3-15: Bel Air High School



Construction for the new building began in 2007 and opened in 2009. The old building (pictured at the top of the page) has since been demolished, making way for new sports fields.